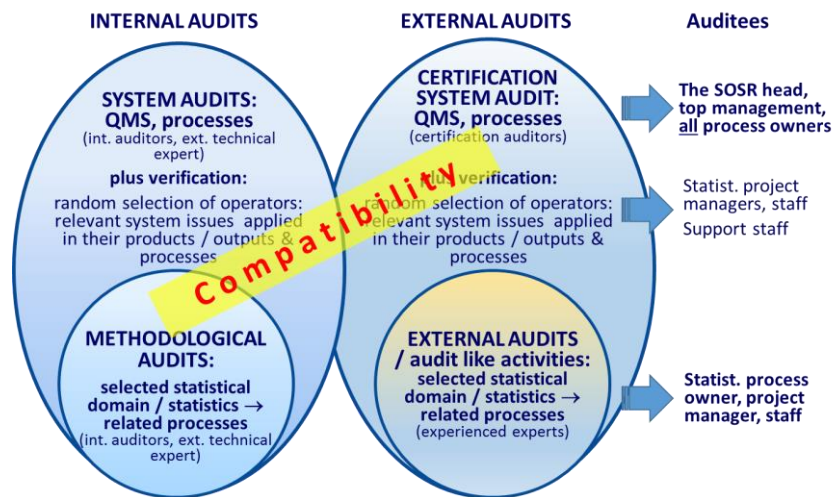# QMS audits in the SOSR
Internal QMS audits

Figure 1: System of the QMS audits in the SOSR

The SOSR QMS was built as an integrated system – it is the ISO 9001 based organisation wide QMS into which the ES CoP requirements, as well as requirements of the own organisation were integrated (and into which in the future, if required or appropriate, requirements of other systems / interested parties will be integrated). The system covers value added processes (statistical production), support managerial and support resource processes.

The system of the QMS audits in the SOSR consists of internal audits and external audits / audit like activities. The description below focuses on the internal audits and briefly mentions the basic link to external audits / audit like activities.

Internal audit
-   is a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled.

In the SOSR context the purpose of internal audits is to:
-   verify whether the QMS conforms to defined requirements (requirements of ISO 9001 with integrated ES CoP, the SOSR own requirements for its QMS) and whether the system is effectively implemented and maintained,
-   contribute to continual improvement of the system,
-   contribute to prevention of undesirable effects.

Internal audits are conducted by the SOSR itself for internal purposes. The auditors (specially trained experts from the SOSR) come from outside the audited process / unit.
There are two types of internal audits in the SOSR:

System audit - where each process (value added, support managerial, support resource) of the SOSR QMS is audited once in three years against requirements of the ISO 9001 standard with relevant ES CoP requirements, as well as against specific requirements of the SOSR itself.

The SOSR system audits are understood as the extended arm of the QMS certification audit according to ISO 9001 standard, which is conducted by the external certification agency every three years (first one in 2006). Both audits are compatible.

Methodological audit – where the concrete statistical domains / statistics, selected according to priorities of the SOSR, are audited against regulatives (external, internal) relevant for the audited subject in the context of ISO 9001 standard and ES CoP, as well as against specific requirements of the SOSR itself.

The SOSR methodological audits are, due to their character, compatible with the internal system audits. As a whole they are also understood as the appropriate precondition for successful external audits (audit like activities) concerning statistical domains / statistics conducted by external organisations.
Note: As a whole they are also a good preparation for the ESS peer reviews conducted by the external peer reviewers in order to evaluate compliance with the ES CoP requirements.

The following **main players** are involved in the internal audit:
On the side of auditors:
- lead auditor, auditors and technical expert. Technical expert comes from outside of the SOSR (consultancy, academia).

On the side of audited party:
- process owner, project manager (in case of methodological audit), staff. In case of managerial processes the Head of the Office is involved too.

Quality Manager (QM) generally acts as the supervisor of the audit.

Note: The post of the QM is held by the Director of Strategy and Integrated Management System. The QM closely cooperates with all process owners, in the case of statistical matters especially with the Director of General Methodology and Registers. Both Directors report directly to the Head of the Office.

Internal audits for the relevant year are stated in the **annual programme** of the internal QMS audits of the SOSR. The programme contains: audited subjects (processes or domain / statistics) that will be audited, teams of auditors, date as well as risk analysis. The programme is elaborated by the QM team and signed by both the Head of the Office and QM. QM also manages and coordinates the conduct of the whole programme.

Internal audit is conducted according to the **plan** elaborated for each audit stated in the annual programme. The plan contains the aim of audit, scope of audit, audit criteria, name of lead auditor, - auditors, - technical expert, date, timetable, question areas for different levels (for

process owner, for staff), evaluation scale. It is elaborated by the lead auditor in cooperation with other auditors.

Audit itself is conducted in the form of a **constructive dialogue** between auditors and audited party. The meaning and importance of areas audited is always explained by auditors, which contributes to the common understanding of the topic within the Office.

The **audit report** elaborated by the lead auditor in cooperation with auditors contains (besides the aim of audit and other factual information from the plan) findings for each audited area, strengths and weaknesses, good practice, suggestions for improvement actions and if necessary suggestions for corrective and preventive actions.

The audit ends when all activates defined in the plan of audit are conducted and the audit report is approved by both auditors and audited party and distributed.

Fulfilling of the **measures adopted** after audit by the process owner is monitored on annual basis by the QM team. Fulfilment of the measures is verified within the next audit.

Summary report on the internal QMS audits conducted according to the annual programme is elaborated by the QM team and submitted as one of annexes to the "**Report on the Evaluation of the SOSR QMS**". The report is the basis for the annual management review of the SOSR QMS where the SOSR top management incl. the Head of the Office takes part. The Report is elaborated by the QM team

In order to ensure the necessary knowledge and skills of auditors the **auditors' level control** is ensured by the QM. The knowledge and skills are achieved by formal trainings and training on the job. The relevant information are provided on the "Card of Personal development" of the auditor.

The following internal legal acts related to internal audits were elaborated and are used in the SOSR:
- Conduct of internal QMS audits is regulated by the SOSR internal legal act "Conduct of Internal Audits" based on the standard ISO 19011 "Guidelines for Auditing Quality Management Systems"
- Adoption, realisation and checking of corrective and preventive measures is regulated by the SOSR internal legal act "Conduct of Corrective and Preventive Actions".
- Documents related to audits are managed according to the SOSR internal legal act „Registry Oder and Registry Plan" and „Control of Documents ".

Lesson learned

Based on the SOSR experience, the internal QMS audits – both system and methodological - are a very good feedback tool providing impartial recommendations for improvements, thus an important impulse contributing to continual QMS development.
Since they are based on a selected sample reflecting the situation during the audit in order to ensure dynamism (of development) repetition of audits is necessary and helpful.

The internal QMS audits have to be understood in the context of the whole system of QMS audits in an organisation – i.e. they should be mutually compatible (internal – internal, internal – external).

The SOSR experience shows, that the **model of compatible QMS audits** is very suitable and effective for the confirmation of meeting requirements of interested parties (ISO 9001, ES CoP, …). It also has to be mentioned that the vertical and horizontal compatibility strongly supports the integrated approach to the statistical production and contributes to the quality awareness / culture across the complete SOSR (from top management to staff members).

The precondition for such a model is, of course, the implementation of an **integrated QMS** that meets requirements of all these parties.

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